

IN THE MATTER OF CLOSED
CAPTIONING AND VIDEO DESCRIPTION
OF VIDEO PROGRAMMING

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

NM DKT - 95-176



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Date: Wednesday, 25-Mar-98 04:17 PM

From: Steve Allen \ Internet:
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IN T

Subject: Response to FCC Emergency Captioning Access.

Karen.

We met at the NCTA meeting in Washington DC, back in November. I wanted to share my personal feelings with you on the topic of captioning in cases of emergencies.

I have been sensitive to these issues since meeting my girlfriend Cynthia. She is deaf, and she shares with me some of her experiences, and hopes that my input, and hers can make a difference to the outcome of these proceedings.

I have attached an HTML file taken from the Sacramento Bee, that highlights the problems of emergency notification. In 1973, an ammunition train bound for Oakland, exploded in the rail yard of my community of Roseville California. The explosions leveled many homes, and hurled munitions for blocks. During the recent excavation of the rail yard for modernization and upgrade, numerous unexploded bombs were found. These bombs were discovered in the evening, and the police were notified, and proceeded to evacuate homes. The local television stations interrupted programming to inform local residents of the danger, and to evacuate. There was no closed captioning of the alert, nor open captioning of the warnings as sometimes occurs during weather related emergencies.

This very dangerous situation is just one of countless examples of how important emergency notification is, and how critical it is to the Deaf, and hearing impaired.

It is my desire to see some kind of emergency alerting device similar to a smoke detector installed in every home that will emit a sound, and flash a light or similar attention getting device when activated by a radio signal.

This device would alert people to tune into their local new source and be informed of what is going on. Captioning of emergency notifications is critical in my opinion. I do not like the idea of an entire group of people standing on the curbs wondering what is going on, while everyone else is leaving town.

Steve Allen
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The Sacramento Bee

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Rail firm hit over handling of bombs: County wants answers

By Yvonne Chiu and Peter Hecht

Bee Staff Writers

(Published Oct. 20, 1997)

Angry Sacramento County officials today will meet with Union Pacific executives to review the company's handling of eight more military bombs that were detonated Sunday at the Roseville rail yard, damaging homes and disturbing hundreds of residents.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department has complained that authorities weren't notified about the Vietnam War-era bombs until at least 41/2 hours after they were discovered. Authorities also were furious to learn that a construction crew under contract with Union Pacific moved the bombs and stacked them together after they were discovered, said sheriff's spokesman Sgt. Jim Cooper.

"It was evident that the bombs had been moved," said Cooper, who said authorities were very concerned over Union Pacific's and the construction crew's handling of the situation. "Not only are they putting themselves at risk, they're putting the public at risk."

The eight intact devices were found Saturday at the western end of the rail yard near the community of Antelope -- just four days after a private company hired by Union Pacific Transportation Co. said the area was clear of bombs. The survey had been prompted by the discovery of a 250-pound bomb on Oct. 7 that was detonated without incident but forced the evacuation of 300 to 400 residents.

Construction work on a \$130 million rebuilding project at the rail switching yard "will be put on hold" until the company meets with local, state and federal officials, said Union Pacific spokesman Mike Furtney.

Furtney would not respond to criticism of the company's actions. "All I can tell you is that we're investigating it, but we're not going to make an official statement until we're satisfied we have all the facts."

Sacramento County Executive Robert Thomas said he also has invited representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to attend today's meeting to ask appropriate military officials for help in searching for additional bombs and ensuring the site is safe.

"We should assume at this point the high probability there is additional bombs," Thomas said. "It's my hope that before construction can proceed on the site, we have a clear survey and a clear protocol."

Sometimes between noon and 1 p.m. Saturday, Union Pacific officials were told a work crew had found more bombs, and they asked for help from the same military bomb squad from Moffett Field in Mountain View that had flow in to handle the Oct. 7 bomb. But sheriff's deputies were not notified until 5:30 p.m., when an anonymous tip was phoned in, a couple of hours after the media received a similar call.

Thomas said he will demand a written agreement from Union Pacific on notification procedures for any future incidents.

The bombs are believed to be remnants of a 1973 freight train explosion. The train was carrying about 7,000 bombs headed for Vietnam and it was never clear how many of those bombs were driven into the ground by the blast.

The eight bombs detonated in the early hours of Sunday morning caused damage ranging from shattered windows to homes hit by shrapnel.

The Sheriff's Department received at least a dozen complaints of fallout damage.

"It shook the house really bad," said Bruce Brown, whose home on Bach Court was hit by a 2-inch piece of shrapnel. "It was a crackling noise, and the first thing I thought was the roof tile slid off."

Brown, 42, said he and his wife and their two children hid in their bathroom during the detonation. After it was over, they inspected their house and found the piece of heavy, sharp-edged metal in an empty flower pot. The shrapnel had ricocheted off the house.

Another resident found the stucco walls of his 11-month-old home on Beethoven Court had cracked under the force of the explosions.

"Supposedly, professional people were looking for them (the bombs) and they couldn't find any," said Byron Gums, 35, standing below a fissure that stretched several feet across his patio.

Saturday night, sheriff's deputies encouraged residents on 43 streets in Antelope to voluntarily evacuate as they did two weeks earlier. But unlike

the Oct. 7 incident, many residents remained home.

The first four bombs were detonated about 1:30 a.m. The bomb squad dug a 10-foot-deep hole in the rail yard, which lies between Roseville and Antelope North roads, and then built a 10-foot berm around the hole.

Residents nearby said the first batch of four bombs sounded like the Oct. 7 bomb. Only faint popping noises could be heard. However, the last four, unleashed about 2:45 a.m., were much more intense.

One was particularly scary. After a bright flash shattered the nighttime sky, residents said their houses trembled with extreme force. Residential, business and car alarms sounded and pets began to howl.

"It felt like the windows were going to pop out," said Patty Tinney, 32, who lives on Roseville Road. "It woke me out of my sleep."

Residents as far away as Fair Oaks also felt the explosions. "We were rather awed," said Jessie Chasko, 78, who lives in an 1896 redwood house in Fair Oaks. "It felt like something actually hit the house."

More than 100 emergency calls were made to sheriff's dispatchers after the detonations began, Cooper said.

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